

# Arkansas Forestry Commission

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3821 W Roosevelt Rd., Little Rock, AR 72204, (501) 297-1581, [chandler.barton@arkansas.gov](mailto:chandler.barton@arkansas.gov)

**IMPORTANCE:** In warm summer months, the loud buzzing hum of insects is usually cicadas. Cicadas are plant-sucking insects with wide set eyes, short antennae, and clear wings. Annual cicadas include many species that are present every year. Periodical cicadas, or the genus *Magicicada*, have either a 13-year life span or a 17-year life span. Arkansas has two 13-year broods, and they are brood numbers 19 (next emergence in 2024) and 23 (emerging in 2015), which emerge in mid- to late-May.



**IDENTIFICATION:** Cicadas are one to two inches long and feature broadly spaced eyes and clear wings. Periodical cicadas have black bodies and red eyes with orange veins on the wings. Annual cicadas typically feature some green coloration.

**SIGNS OF ATTACK:** Cicadas feed on deciduous shrubs and plants. Periodical cicadas may damage small shrubs and trees when females cut numerous egg laying sites in the twigs.

**LIFE CYCLE:** There are annual cicada species that have life-cycles of 2-5 years, but adults are present every year. In contrast, the periodical cicadas are synchronized so they all mature in the same year. The periodical cicada has either a 13 or a 17-year life cycle. Juvenile cicadas, called nymphs, live underground and feed on tree roots. In the spring, fully matured nymphs emerge from underground and molt on vegetation into white adults until their exoskeleton hardens and turns darker. After a few days, males begin “singing” in groups in order to attract females. This singing or buzzing only occurs during the day. Mated females can lay several hundred eggs individually by piercing living twigs. Eggs hatch six to ten weeks later, and nymphs drop from the trees and burrow underground. A periodical cicada emergence lasts up to six weeks.



**CONTROL:** Cicadas rarely cause significant damage to trees, though younger trees may suffer some die-back. To avoid damage to your young trees during periodical cicada emergence, cover them with a screening material (like cheesecloth) secured tightly at the bottom until the cicadas die off.

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